

Helene Gayle Biography

"Investing in Women"

Helene Gayle was born and raised in Buffalo, New York.

Helene Gayle is an expert on health, global development and humanitarian issues. After receiving a BS in Psychology she became a pediatrician and then an epidemiologist with an MPH in Public Health. She spent 20 years with the Centers for Disease Control, working primarily on HIV/AIDS and achieved the rank of Rear Admiral and Assistant Surgeon General in the U.S. Public Health Service.

Dr. Gayle then directed the HIV, TB and Reproductive Health Program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

At CARE, she headed one of the world's premier humanitarian organizations, with programs in nearly 70 countries to end poverty. Dr Gayle has accomplished much in her career. This site will focus on her work at Care as President and CEO 2006 - 2015.

Under Gayle's leadership, CARE USA introduced three signature programs as part of its "Pathway to Empowerment".

"Mothers Matter" focuses on child and maternal health, seeking to improve access to safe pregnancy and delivery services for 30 million women in Africa, Asia, and Latin America by 2015.

"Power Within" focuses on girls' education, seeking to empower 10 million girls around the world to access quality primary education and gain leadership skills by 2015. And

"Access Africa" focuses on micro financing, seeking to ensure that 30 million people in 39 countries have access to a set of basic financial services by the next decade.

In 2015, Gayle became inaugural CEO of McKinsey Social Initiative.

Dr. Gayle previously served as president and CEO of The Chicago Community Trust, one of the nation's oldest and largest community foundations, from October 2017 to June 2022. Under her leadership, the Trust adopted a new strategic focus on closing the racial and ethnic wealth gap in the Chicago region.

Helene D. Gayle, M.D., MPH, began serving as the 11th president of Spelman College on July 1, 2022.